

Ecoguide: Fynbos, Colin Paterson-Jones and John Manning (Eds.), 2007, Briza Publications, Pretoria, Price: R159.00, soft cover, 184 pages including photographs, ISBN 978-1-875093-66-3, Web: www.briza.co.za, E-mail: books@briza.co.za

This beautifully illustrated Ecoguide has just reached local bookshelves. The guide was compiled by one of the best photographers of natural scenery in South Africa, Dr Colin Paterson-Jones, together with one of the most outstanding Botanists, particularly for Fynbos, or more specifically the Western Cape Region of South Africa. This area which includes the Cape Floristic Region encompasses some of the most breathtaking scenery of Africa including: the Cape Fold Mountains and the eastern and western coastlines of the Cape.

There are short notes on the history of the Region, birds, insects and spiders, mammals, reptiles and frogs. The major part of the guide is taken up by excellent photographs and descriptions of some of the more spectacular and rare plants that the visitor might see. There are some notes on veld types which the traveler or visitors will experience should they travel along the suggested routes.

The authors are to be complimented on compiling this Ecoguide which does much to bring this beautiful flora to the man in the street. Yet, it is sufficiently comprehensive to assist students in the Plant Sciences in general plant identification. It contains information for horticulturists and gardeners who wish to grow indigenous plants.

South African tourists will be wise to acquire a copy of this pocket book when touring the Cape Region. I anticipate that this book will find favour with visitors from abroad. Tourist firms would do well to include this valuable book as part of their tour package to assist their clients to get the most out of a visit to this part of South Africa.

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Aromatic Plants, K.V. Peter (Eds.) 2007, New India Publishing Agency, Pitam Pura, New Delhi, 110 088, ISBN: 81-89422-45-6, Price: \$95.50, 290 pages including 42 colour photographs, Web: www.bookfactoryindia.com, E-mail: tonewindiapublishingagency@gmail.com

Aromatic Plants is a volume in the Horticultural Science Series — 1 published by the New India Publishing Agency with the support of the Editor, Professor Peter. There were six authors.

Unfortunately there is no clear indication which authors were responsible for specific Chapters. There are seven Chapters dealing with: "History, importance and scope of aromatic plants"; "Classification of aromatic plants"; "Extraction of aroma principles"; "Quality assurance of essential oils". "Aromatherapy"; "Major sources of aromatic oils"; and "Other sources of aromatic oils".

The book covers a wealth of good information on the importance of oil producing plants, best cultivation practices, the effects of cultivation practices on oil yield and quality, the array of species that are important, the best procedure for oil extraction and storage. I found the various uses fascinating. This emphasizes why aromatic oils play such a major role in the social, health and culinary preferences of the world population. While aspects of chemistry are covered, the authors refrained from going overboard on this aspect of aromatic plants. Sufficient information is available elsewhere.

The colour photographs are a bit small but they are of acceptable quality to illustrate plant structure and act as aids in plant identification. The overall quality of the printed version could be better but then the book is very reasonably priced. Overall the book will be useful to students interested in the fascinating field covered by aromatic plants.

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Phycotoxins, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Luis M. Botana (Eds.), Blackwell Publishing, (2007), First Edition, Price £115.00, hard cover, 368 pages, ISBN-13: 978-0-8138-2700-1, Web: www.blackwellfood.com, E-mail: direct.order@marston.co.uk

There is no doubt that harmful algal blooms are increasing worldwide, apparently as a result of recent changes in several environmental and climatic factors. The increased frequency and wide distribution of toxic algal blooms has become a major environmental and economic problem that menaces wildlife and human health. This book is essentially devoted to the chemistry, biochemistry and toxicity of marine toxins that are recognized to be very important with regard to human health. Many toxins have been discovered that are hazardous to human health and which present a real challenge as how to cope with them. They are recognized to provoke food poisoning as a result of, e.g., their neurotoxic or hepatotoxic potential. In recent years it became apparent how diverse they are in terms of their chemical structure, mechanism of action and toxicity. It is my feeling that